

## SCHOOLS FORUM

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**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2013 AT THE USHER SUITE - CIVIC CENTRE, ST STEPHENS PLACE, TROWBRIDGE. BA14 8AH.**

**Present:**

Mr N Baker (Chairman), Mrs Aileen Bates, Mr Steve Clark, Jan Hatherell, Mrs Sue Jiggins, Mr M Keeling, Rob Parsons, Mr J Proctor, Ms I Sidmouth, Mr Martin Watson (Vice-Chair) and Mrs C Williamson

**Also Present:**

Samuel Bath, Julia Cramp, Cllr Tony Deane, Cllr Richard Gamble, Karina Kulawik, Cllr Bill Moss and Elizabeth Williams

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**41 Election of Chair**

**Resolved**

**The Forum agreed to appoint Mr Neil Baker as Chair of Schools Forum for 2013/14.**

**42 Election of Vice-Chair**

**Resolved**

**The Forum agreed to appoint Mr Martin Watson as Vice-Chair of Schools Forum for 2013/14.**

**43 Apologies and changes to membership**

The Forum noted apologies from:

Dr Peter Biggs, Mr Andy Bridewell, Mrs Jane Franchi, Mr Tim Gilson, Cllr Laura Mayes, Mr Ken Brough and Mr Rob Rees.

The following changes to membership were also made:

Mrs Julia Bird is replaced by Mr Rob Parsons, (Colerne CofE Primary)  
Mrs Jane Franchi is replaced by Ms Amanda Christopher, (Diocesan representative)  
Mr Tim Gilson is replaced by Ms Michelle Chilcott (South Wilts. Grammar)  
Mr Rob Rees is replaced by Ms Claire Shaw (Wiltshire College)

**44 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chair thanked Stephanie Denovan and the Schools and Learning team for the work and service to Local Education and the Forum.

45 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

46 **Minutes of the previous Meeting**

**Resolved**

**The Forum agreed to approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held 27 June 2013 as a true and accurate record.**

47 **Children and Young People's Trust Board Update**

Julia Cramp, Service Director – Commissioning and Performance, provided updates on the following:

The Early Intervention Strategy had been published on the Child Trust Pathway website and was open for consultation. Comments were invited to be made on the strategy.

A new proposed Children's Services structure for SEN and disability services was circulated. This brought together Social Care and SEN in line with legislation and the national direction of travel.

48 **Academies and the Local Government Pension Scheme**

David Anthony – Head of Pensions presented the report, and outlined the process that the Wiltshire Pension Fund takes in setting up Academies. This is aligned as far as possible to the both the principles of the Government and the pension scheme regulations. The Government currently have a consultation on this and the Wiltshire Pension Fund will review its approach should the Government change its guidance on Academy pensions as a result. Academies were advised that a FRS17 actuarial report would need to be completed each financial year to include in final accounts. The attributable costs for this were outlined, with around £2-3k for the first year of set-up and £700 p/a for future years.

The Forums attention was drawn to the affect of conversion to academy status on contribution rates. Increased rates were expected for some, with contributions expected to be higher than those currently with the LEA.

A meeting on 10 October 2013 at St John's Parish Church, Trowbridge was outlined, where the pension valuation would be discussed. A second meeting on 21 October 2013 would also be held at the same venue specifically for those schools converting or recently converted to Academy status..

Cllr Tony Deane then invited a representative of the Forum to attend the next Wiltshire Pension Fund meeting.

**Resolved**

**The Forum noted the report**

## 49 **Budget Monitoring 2013-14 and Final DSG Settlement**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance outlined the report to the Forum, detailing the budget monitoring information and position of the Dedicated Schools Grant for the 2013-14 financial year.

A projected and planned underspend of around £800k for Early Years Free Entitlement (2 Year Olds) was noted. This would be rolled forward to 2014/15 to support the agreed hourly rate for 2 year old places.

The Forums attention was also drawn to the overspend on free entitlement of 3+4 year olds of around £200k, and the continuous monitoring of this overspend by the Council.

The underspend against high needs top up Budgets of around £1.2m was attributed to the savings made in unfilled places. This was explained further in the analysis of high needs budgets and expenditure 2013-14 item.

The DSG settlement for 2013-14 was presented to the Forum. The final allocation issued by the DfE for Wiltshire was £303.113m (prior to deductions for academies recoupment and direct funding of academy high needs places). This was noted as being a £930k increase from the provisional statement. This was attributed to the increased number of places in the High Needs block, expected to fund the additional provision of specialist provision (including post 16 provision) in FE colleges and Independent Specialist Providers (ISP's).

### **Resolved**

**The Forum agreed to:**

- a) Note the report on Budget Monitoring 2013/14 and the final DSG Settlement.**
- b) Confirm to the DfE that the allocation of DSG for 2013-14 would be in support of the schools budget for 2013-14.**

## 50 **Reports from Working Groups**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the reports and minutes from the Schools Funding Working Group, SEN Working Group and the Early Years Reference Group.

### **Resolved**

**The Forum agreed:**

- a) To note the reports and recommendations contained within the working group reports.**
- b) To implement the proposed changes to the Early Years Single Funding Formula for rapidly expanding settings and starters and leavers prior to the headcount, subject to appropriate audit arrangements being in place for the headcount.**

- c) To amend the Terms of reference for the EYRG to delete the requirement for the Chair of the group to be an LA Officer.**

**51 Schools Revenue Balances 2012-13**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report and outlined the movement in net revenue balances over the past 3 years.

The Forums attention was drawn to the 2012/13 balance of £7.9m which represented an £800k reduction from the previous year. This movement was attributed to the number of schools converting to academy status.

In addition, the Forum noted the revenue balances outside the permissible limit, with 45 schools in total accounting for £4.37m. Approximately 22.5% of schools hold 55% of revenue balances. The forum noted the procedure for clawing back excess balances above the permissible limits.

The forum noted that 16 Schools were in deficit with a total value of £1.21m. This reflected a decrease in numbers, again attributed to the number of academy conversions.

**Resolved**

**The forum agreed**

- a) To note the report on Schools Revenue Surplus and Deficit Balances 2012/13**
- b) To claw back the revenue Balance for Bowerhill School in accordance with the controls on surplus balances scheme. Bowerhill School should also be informed in writing of the right to appeal.**

**52 Schools Funding Formula 2014-15: Outcome of consultation with Schools**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance outlined the report which detailed the outcome of the consultation held with schools over changes to the lump sum value and central services.

The forum considered the comments in the consultation and the impact of each lump sum payment on school size.

**Resolved**

**The forum agreed:**

- a) To set the maximum lump sum payable for primary schools as £85,000 and for secondary schools as £175,000.**
- b) To set the delegation/de-delegation of Central Budgets 2014-15 as follows:**

<b><u>DfE Heading</u></b>	<b><u>Wiltshire Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Maintained Primary Schools</u></b>	<b><u>Maintained Secondary Schools</u></b>
<b>Contingencies</b>	<b>Schools Contingency</b>	<b>De-delegate</b>	<b>De-delegate</b>
<b>Free school meals eligibility</b>	<b>Free School Meals Eligibility Service</b>	<b>De-delegate</b>	<b>De-delegate</b>
<b>Licences/subscriptions</b>	<b>SIMS Licence</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>
	<b>HCSS Licence</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>
	<b>Copyright Licences (excluding the national CLA and MPA Licences)</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>
<b>Staff costs – supply cover</b>	<b>Trade Union Duties</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>
	<b>Maternity Costs</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>
<b>Support for minority ethnic pupils and underachieving groups</b>	<b>Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS)</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>Delegate</b>
	<b>Traveller Education Service</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>Delegate</b>
<b>Behaviour support services</b>	<b>Primary Behaviour Support Service</b>	<b>De-Delegate</b>	<b>Not delivered to secondary schools</b>

### 53 Minimum Funding Guarantee Exceptions 2014/15

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report which outlined Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) Exceptions to be considered for 2014-15. These included:

- New school allowances and new school new year group funding.
- Rents, where the school no longer qualifies under the revised funding proposals.
- Split site funding where a school no longer qualifies.

- Changes categories of, or spending on, central budgets.
- Schools with special units.
- Requests to vary the protection for special schools and academies.

## **Resolved**

### **The Forum:**

- a) **Noted the report**
- b) **Supported the following recommendations to be sent to the Education Funding Agency (EFA):**
  1. **To seek approval from the Department of Education (DfE) to remove new school allowances and new school new year group funding from the MFG;**
  2. **To seek approval from the EFA to decrease the qualifying threshold from 1% to 0.75% of schools budgets and to continue to remove the rent from the MFG calculation;**
  3. **To seek approval from the EFA to remove split site funding from the MFG where a school no longer qualifies under the revised definition;**
  4. **To seek approval from the EFA to exclude new additional categories or changes in spend on central services budget should the consultation recommend such changes to the delegations or de-delegations**
  5. **To seek approval from the EFA to amend the baselines of schools with special units to reflect the new deduction of places from the number on roll, rather than the number of pupils, in order to calculate MFG protection on a consistent basis; and**
  6. **To seek approval from the EFA to allow amendment to the baseline of special schools and academies in order to not overfund the school via the MFG mechanism as day and residential pupil numbers have changed.**

## **54 Analysis of High Needs Budgets and Expenditure 2013-14**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report alongside Karina Kulawik, Manger for Inclusion Services.

Attention was drawn to the increased underspend against the independent special schools partly due to the inclusion of post-16 placement funding in the post-16 top up budget so that all post 16 costs are recorded together.

The Forum discussed the review on expenditure within the high needs block, noting the need for a detailed piece of work on residential top-ups. It considered the options presented for increasing top up values in the current year to support the transition to the new funding methodology.

## **Resolved**

### **The Forum agreed**

- a) To note the analysis of the high needs block.**
- b) That ELP would continue to be funded in the same way as high needs provision through place plus**
- c) That there would be no minimum number of ELP places funded**
- d) That Post 16 and pre 16 would continue to be treated separately.**
- e) That additional places in ELP would be funded at top up value, plus an additional place value (adjusted for the AWPU if the pupil is already in the school)**
- f) That the value of top ups for ELP would maintain parity with values in resource bases and special schools**
- g) That the day element of top up rates for special schools be increased to the following values for 2013-14 as an in-year adjustment:**

<b>Band</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>
<b>1+</b>	<b>18,054</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>12,361</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>9,514</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>6,668</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>2,814</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>485</b>

- h) To receive proposals to review residential place numbers, top up rates and the potential for extended day top up values for 2014-15 at a future meeting.**
- i) To note the issues arising for consideration in the budget setting process for 2014-15, which include the financial pressures around alternative provision.**
- j) That the language for Named Pupil Allowances (NPAs) should be changed when writing statements with immediate effect; statements should no longer refer to total hours of support.**

**55 Proposals for changes to the banding structure and top up values for ELP and Resource Bases 2014-15**

Liz Williams, Head of Finance introduced the report to the Forum.

Following the outline of the proposals to the ELP provision, the descriptors outlined in the report for the 3 bands across the resource bases were discussed. Based on the number of pupils in each resource band it was estimated that the additional cost of the revised banding would be around £204,000.

**Resolved**

**The Forum agreed**

- a) the revised banding structure for resource bases, with 3 top up bands to be used with from the next moderation process. Top up values are to be finalised as part of the budget setting process, but pupils will be moderated according to the new bands this autumn.**
- b) That top up values for resource bands 2 and 3, be applied to ELP1 and ELP2 bands and relevant special school bands respectively in order to maintain parity throughout the banding system.**

**56 Urgent Items**

The forum noted concern over changes to the management structure at Wiltshire Council, and discussed the possibility of receiving a briefing note from the Director of Children's Services on the new proposed structure showing clear delineation of roles and functions.

**57 Confirmation of dates for future meetings**

The following future dates for Schools Forum were noted:

12 December 2013  
16 January 2014  
13 March 2014

(Duration of meeting: 1.45 - 4.15 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Samuel Bath, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718211, e-mail [samuel.bath@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:samuel.bath@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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